

THE MASTER OF THE ISLES.

THERE is rumor in Dark Harbor,
And the fo' are all astir;
For a stranger in the offing
Draws them down to gaze at her,
In the gray of early morning,
Black against the orange streak,
Making in below the ledges,
With no colors at her peak.
Something makes their hearts uneasy
As they watch the long black hull,
For she brings the storm behind her
While before her there is lull.
With . . . pilot and unspoken,
Where the dancing breakers are,
Presently she veers and races
In across the roaring bar,—
Rounds and luffs and comes to anchor,
While the wharf begins to throng.
Silence falls upon the women,
And misgiving stirs the strong.
Then with some obscure foreboding,
As a gray-haired watcher smiles,
They perceive the fearless captain
Is the Master of the Isles.
They recall the bleak December
Many streaming yea & ago,
When the stranger has been sighted
Driving shoreward with the snow;
When the Master came among them
With his calm and courtly pride,
And had sailed away at sundown
With pale Dora for his bride;
How again he came one summer
When the herring schools were late
And had cleared before the morning
With old Alec's son for mate.
There was glamour with the Master:
He had tales of far-off seas;
But his habit and demeanor
Were of other lands than these.
He had never made the Harbor
But there sailed away with him
Wife or child or friend or lover,
Leaving eyes to strain and swim,—
Strain and wait for their returning:
Yet they never had come back;
For the pale wake of the Master
Is a wandering fading track.
Just beyond our utmost fathom
Is the anchorage we crave,
But the Master knows the soundings
By the reach of every wave.
Just beyond the last horizon,
Vague upon the weather-gleam,
Loom the Faroff Isles forever,
The tradition of a dream.
There a white and brooding summer
Haunts upon the gray sea plain,
Where the gray sea winds are quiet
At the sources of the rain.
There where all world-weary dreamers
Get them forth to their release,
Lie the colonies of the kindred
In the provinces of peace.
Thither in the stormy sunset
Will the Master sail to-night;
And the village will be silent
When he drops below the light.
Not a soul on all the hillside
But will watch her when she clears,
Dreaming of the Port o' Strangers
In the roadstead of the years.
"Port o' Strangers, Port o' Strangers!"
"Where away?" "On the weather bow."
"Drive her down the closing distance!"
That's to-morrow, but not now.
What imperial adventure
Some wide morning it will be,
Sweeping in to Lonely Haven
From the chartless round of sea!
How imposing a departure,
While this little harbor smiles,
Steering for the outer searim
With the Master of the Isles!

AN AFTERWORD.

BROTHER, the world above you
Is very fair to-day,
And all things seem to love you
The old accustomed way.
Here in the heavenly weather
In June's white arms you sleep,
Where once on the hills together
Your haunts you used to keep.
The idling sun that lases
Along the open field
And gazes to the daisies
Of secrets unrevealed;
The wind that stirs the grasses
A moment, and then stills
Their trouble as he prases
Up to the darkling hills,—
And to the breezy clover
Has many things to say
Of that unwearied rover
Who once went by this way:
The miles of elm-treed meadows;
The clouds that voyage on,
Streeling their noiseless shadows
From the countries of the sun;
The tranquil river reaches
And the pale stars of dawn;
The thrushes in their beeches
For reverie withdrawn;
With all your forest fellows
In whom the blent heart calls,
For whom the green leaf yellows,
On whom the red leaf falls;
The dumb and tiny creatures
Of flower and blade and sod,
That dimly wear the features
And attributes of God;
The airy migrant hummers
On gauzy wings of fire,
Those wanderers and roamers
Of infinite desire;
The rainbirds and all dwellers
In solitude and peace,
Those lingerers and foretellers
Of infinite release;
Yea, all the dear things living
That rove or bask or swim,
Remembering and misgiving,
Have felt the day grow dim.
Even the glad things growing,
Blossom and fruit and stem,
Are poorer for your going
Because you were of them.
Yet since you loved to cherish
Their pleading beauty here
Your heart shall not quite perish
In all the golden year:
But God's great dream above them
Must be a tinge less pale
Because you lived to love them
And make their joy prevail.

HAWTHORN HILL,
MIDSUMMER E. J. 1902.

A ROBIN SONG.

"O lover, be loyal, lover, be loyal,
Lover, be loyal while life is new!"
A robin sang from the April bough;
And her mate sang, "Love, be true!"
For the burden of morrow is more than now,
And the rain must follow the griding plow.
"O lover, be loyal, lover, be loyal,
The year is going, the days are few!
Red was the morning, gray is the rain."
And her mate sang, "Love, be true!"
For the griefs of morrow are more than now,
And the gulls may follow the griding plow.
"O lover, be loyal, lover, be loyal,
Lover, be loyal thy whole life through!
Red is the rain where the sun goes down."
And her mate sang, "Love, be true!"
For the joys of morrow are more than now,
As harvest follows the griding plow.

THE TRAGEDY OF WILLOW.

"Water, Water of the wood."
Said the lissome willow tree,
"Take me with you, tawny Water,
Down the summer to the sea!"
"Willow, Willow," said the water,
"It is weary far to sea:
But if you will love me, Willow,
You shall learn to run with me."
"Water, Water," said the willow,
"You are brave and you are strong;
Here among the silent shadows
I have loved you, loved you long."
"Willow, Willow, on my bosom,
Hurry, hurry, hide your face;
Then across the world together
We will lead the wind a race."
"Water, Water, how you babble!
Yet I know we'll never part,
For my little face is hidden
Deeper, deeper in your heart."
"Hurry, hurry," said the water,
"Let us wander, let us go;
For I hear the hush of summer,
And the cailing of the snow."
"Water, Water," said the willow,
"Wait and I will go with you.
I am only common Willow,
But I love you, love you true!"
Willow, Willow, how I wonder
That you can be so deceived,
When you know the spendthrift Water
Never yet has stopped or grieved!
Water, Water, how I wonder
You can make so much ado
Over simple little Willow—
And be glad when all is through!

THE FAITHLESS LOVER.

O Life, dear Life, in this fair house
Long since did I, it seems to me,
In some mysterious doleful way
Fall out of love with thee.
For, Life, thou art become a ghost,
A memory of days gone by,
A poor forsaken thing between
A heartache and a sigh.
And now, with shadows from the hills
Thronging the twilight, wraith on wraith,
Unlock the door and let me go
To thy dark rival Death!

THE FAITHFUL LOVE.

O Heart, dear Heart, in this fair house
Why hast thou wearied and grown tired,
Between a morning and a night,
Of all thy soul desired?
Fond one, who cannot understand
Even those shadows on the floor,
Yet must be dreaming of dark loves
And joys beyond my door!
But I am beautiful past all
The timid tumult of thy mood,
And thou returning not must still
Be mine in solitude.

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As these verses are printed for private circulation only, it is requested that you will guard against their appearance in the public press.

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BLISS CARMAN.